

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting

11 July 2017

Minutes

Present: Philip Murray (PM), Edel McGurk (EM), Catherine Murray (CM) Michael Winton (MW), Dave Rushton (DR), Martyn Spence (MS), Frank Farquharson

Apologies Jon Fowler (JF)

Actions highlighted in **bold**. SC = Steering Committee

1. Review of Actions from previous meeting (notes below limited to actions requiring further work.)
 - 1.1. Action on relative CIL priorities carried over to next meeting. **Action JF**
 - 1.2. The action on FF to seek advice about accommodating the edge road in the context of the Flood Zone to be reconsidered after meetings with SODC this week. **Action FF** to brief DR & PM in advance of SODC meeting. **DR and PM** to report back.
2. Sites Assessment Action
 - 1.1. A sub-group comprising PM, CM, DR, FF & EM agreed an approach to Site Assessment. It will cover Ben 1 - 8, The Materials Store (aka The Salt Store) and the Meer. The assessment covers 6 criteria: Landscape Character and Setting, Green Infrastructure, Heritage, Core Facilities, Transport, and Other. It will follow a standard template showing current use, size, planning history and NP team view on fit with Plan objectives. MW raised the question about drainage infrastructure. It was agreed that this was a vital consideration for a place like Benson. FF agreed to look at supporting documents in relevant planning applications for information. Where there is no site-specific information available, the conclusions of the Thames Water Benson Drainage Strategy would be useful source of evidence around the matter. Link- [Benson Drainage Strategy - Corporate - Thames Water](#) **Action FF**
 - 1.2. Planning History information has been produced and shared by PM. FF and PM agreed to consider how the information will be summarised to add to the Sites Assessment document. **Action FF and PM**
 - 1.3. CM is working on the Heritage angle, and is likely to complete the work by the suggested date of 21 July.
3. **Site Numbering, Labelling and Maps**
 - 1.1. The policy and site numbering approach was felt by some to have created some confusion in the Pre-sub draft of the Plan. PM has proposed an approach to labelling to address the confusion caused by, for example, NP2/Ben1 references. A Master Plan approach to presenting the opening sections of the plan will be followed, with the Edge Road provision as a unifying rationale but we won't pursue a single allocation across Ben 1, 2, 3 and 4. We will have separate sites with distinct,

site-specific policies, but we will require developers to collaborate. **Action PM to update JF** on suggested site/policy referencing system (reproduced below).

- NP1 - Benson Village Boundary
- NP2 - Masterplan
- NP3 - Land off Littleworth Road (Site BEN1)
- NP4 - Land off Hale Road (Site BEN2)
- NP5 - Land off Sands Way (Site BEN3/4)
- NP6 - Land off The Sands (*or off Watlington Rd?*) (Site BEN5)
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- NP11 - The Meer (Site BEN10)
- NP12 - Design
- NP13 - Traffic Flow
- NP14 - Parking

1.2. To further aid clarity, CM also proposed to commission Alice to produce a small map for each individual site, highlighting the location against a neutral background to insert into both the Sites Assessment document and the site-specific policy section in the plan. This visual cue should make a real difference. **Action CM** to brief Alice.

4. HCA Update, Cala Homes discussions

1.1. PM and DR reported on their meeting with HCA last week. The HCA operation has been restructured, creating separate departments for handling big sites (>2000 houses) and smaller sites. This explains the reduced comms recently. The meeting was constructive, but HCA advised that it is too early to confirm what funding will be made available for infrastructure, but they are still considering any relief road options to support the allocation of Chalgrove Airfield in the Local Plan. AECOM is still handling the traffic modelling/transport work, and it was confirmed that HCA is prepared to share baseline data. They intend to apply for outline planning permission later this year. DR emphasised the pressing timeframe for the Benson Plan.

1.2. A positive meeting was held with Cala Homes on the subject of Ben 1.

5. SODC Meeting

1.1. PM briefed the SC on a meeting planned for this Thursday, 13th July with SODC, involving Sharon Crawford, Paula Fox, James Gagg, Ricardo Rios and Gary Palmer. The meeting will primarily be focused on transport. DR will be seeking to reach an agreed shape of the transport study. Timescales are a concern. However, DR report that the traffic modelling data and analysis in the DWH Ben 4 application may meet the requirements for additional traffic analysis identified by SODC and OCC in their consultation feedback. **Action DR and PM** to report back at next meeting.

6. Workstream leads update

1.1. FF making progress. There are two problematic issues that have taken time to resolve: the expansion of the GP's surgery - this is nearing a conclusion. The second is the burial ground - the best current option is the paddock adjacent to the allotments on St Helen's Ave. However, access is a problem. It was agreed to defer further discussion to next meeting as JF may have some useful thoughts. **Action JF** to add to agenda.

- 1.2. DR has been prioritising the transport study but has made some progress in processing the feedback. The plan is to respond to local feedback through a mixture of verbal and written feedback.
 - 1.3. CM has been working through the feedback and has provided PM with commentary for the spreadsheet. She needs a conversation about the buffer with EM so that it is about more than the ecology and should cover other matters such as creating some physical space to manage the risk of settlement coalescence.
 - 1.4. EM has been focusing on resolving some specific knotty issues, and has made comments on the Allotment, Recreation and School Field text. Consultation feedback has been reviewed, but the conclusions not captured yet on the s/s. The changes to the Environment chapter are yet to be processed including addressing any gaps created by the distribution of GI text across the Plan.
 - 1.5. PM sought confirmation timeframe for completing feedback responses and plan updates. It was agreed that where there are no significant issues, we will aim to clear all of that detail by end August. The earliest we are likely to submit is end of September. **Action all work stream leads** to continue the good work.
7. Big Issues Check
- 1.1. PM reviewed the list he emailed to the team. All are in hand.
8. Ben 7 Appeal
9. This is planned for 1/2 August. The PC is not a Rule 6 participant because of an error in communication, but PINS have indicated that they are prepared to allow the PC to submit evidence. We need to consider whether to submit evidence at this late stage, and if so, what we should submit. **Action PM and JF** to discuss.
10. School Playing field
- 1.1. EM updated on a productive meeting with the Trustees of the Voluntary School Trust. They are very keen make the point that the school does need to expand. They agreed that it is important that adequate green space is safeguarded adjacent to the school to support 'break-time' recreation is important. The feasibility study for the school expansion however is not sufficiently advanced to help define how much of the field will be required, so designating as LGS is not realistic at present. It was agreed that the Plan would acknowledge the need for expansion but strongly encourage the Trustees to recognise the importance of retaining as much as possible of the field to support the overall principles in the plan of valuing green space for the array of benefits (recreational, health, design) it offers. **Action Edel** to capture key conclusions in a brief note.
 - 1.2. EM has provided some suggested text to DR, which has been incorporated into the updated draft plan. The SC reflected on whether AA's suggestion of a policy to support school expansion should be taken forward. It was agreed that it was important to maintain a separation between our Plan and the separate decision on the Littleworth development by SODC to allow compensation for loss of recreational space by offering alternative facilities across a road, so a policy should not be included; rather than matter will be explained in the text. **Action DR** to update text.
11. Locality Update - Matter carried over to next agenda. Action Jon to include

12. FOBL Letter

- 1.1. A letter regarding options for library expansion or replacement has been received for consideration by the Neighbourhood Planning team. PM will pass the letter to DR and the Strategic Infrastructure Group for consideration. **Action PM, and Action DR** to consider.

13. Review of key Policies

- 1.1. DR sought views on a proposal for a policy on a relief road (Ben Edge 1) shared by JF. The SC supported the proposal.
- 1.2. DR sought advice on whether to maintain our position on our Policy on car parking provision per house. Our current policy is more generous than the standards set by SODC and OCC. There were no very strong views on the matter; DR agreed to reflect further following the meeting with SODC. **Action DR**
- 1.3. DR sought advice on the EV charging points policy. It was agreed that whilst the SC recognises the need for a future-proofed plan, the questions around which re-charging technology will be favoured in the long-term means that it will be difficult to sustain the position. **Action DR** to update text.

14. Material Store (aka Salt Store) discussion

- 1.1. The Sites Assessment document preparation has highlighted the need for consistency in how the aspirations for the Material Store are described. AA visited the site following the last SC meeting, and provided some advice by email, recognising the fact that the site is worthy of consideration as a candidate for LGS designation. But the aspiration of the transport group (to maintain flexibility around the matter such that it could offer space for parking in the future) remains.
- 1.2. PM suggested that the decision should be informed by the balance of evidence, both of the ecological value of the site and the likelihood that the Material Store represents a realistic option for parking, the question being: would people choose to park in a secluded place with rough vegetation on the gravel (which will need to be maintained as part of the ecological interest on the site) when there is an option to park on the roadside on St Helen's Ave instead?
- 1.3. Further evidence on ecological interest continues to be gathered by the Benson Nature Group. FF advised that any proposals for development of the site are very unlikely to be approved due to the Flood zone the site sits in, and DR pointed out that OCC's own assessment recorded a flood risk of c. 93%. The SC agreed that the NP would not allocate this site, and strong wording would be included recognising the importance of the site as part of the villages GI network. **Action EM** to amend the Site Assessment record for this site.

15. AoB

- None

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25th July at 7pm at the Parish Hall. [Update, the meeting has since been rescheduled for Monday 24th July]